



The Learning Institute

Why listen to children and young people? Part Two: All voices matter

Overview

The right of a child or young person to be listened to and taken seriously whenever decisions are made that affect them, is one that is accepted by almost every country. This CPD is the second part of our series, and focuses on empowering those children and young people who may struggle not only to express their view, but to have that view heard.

Target audience

Multi-disciplinary contexts

Duration

Approximately 1 hour

The Learning Institute provides opportunities for individuals and communities through high quality education, training and research programmes that challenge personal barriers and promote social inclusion. To find out more, please get in touch.

Introduction

Children and young people are at the centre of our practice and listening to what they think is vital. Some find it hard to express their views, yet these may often be the children and young people who need to be heard the most.

Objectives

- identify some of the reasons why children and young people find it hard to express their own views
- explore some specific approaches and techniques that can address this

Resources

Pen and paper for note taking

Internet access to following:

- Young people with SEN and disabilities have a voice for Savvy App [video], available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZceB69qdgw
- Exemplary practice: Why this special school is proud of its pupil voice [article], available at www.specialneedsjungle.com/exemplary-practice-why-this-special-school-is-proud-of-its-pupil-voice/
- Say your piece [article], available at www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/say-your-piece

Task 1: Revisiting The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989)

In part one we looked at a paraphrase of Article Twelve:

Every child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Consider the statement highlighted in green - note the use of language, particularly the use of the words 'forming' and 'express'. In your view:

- Can all children and young people at some level form a view?
- Why might some children and young people struggle to express this view?
- From your own professional or personal experience, or using your own ideas, how can we as practitioners empower those children?

Task 2: How to support children with complex learning needs to express their view?

Case Study 1: Sefton Council

Access the video *Young people with SEN and disabilities have a voice for Savvy App*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZceB69qdgw>.

Key terms in video	
SEND	special educational needs and disability
EHC plan	Education Health and Care Plan, a detailed individually tailored SEND support plan, legally binding
Local Offer	the support and services available in a local area to support children and young people with SEND

As you watch the clip, note down your responses to these questions;

- What kind of atmosphere was created in the group and how did this allow the young people to express their views?
- How has Sefton directly involved young people in its provision of services? How do you think this may help other children and young people with SEND access these services?

Case Study 2: Camberwell Park Specialist Support School

The children and young people in Case Study 1 could use speech to express themselves, but what about children and young people who do not or cannot use speech?

Spend a few moments reflecting on how you and your setting could support these children and young people to express their views.

Access the article *Exemplary practice: Why this special school is proud of its pupil voice*, available at www.specialneedsjungle.com/exemplary-practice-why-this-special-school-is-proud-of-its-pupil-voice

Key terms in article	
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication- a range of strategies and tools to help people who do not or cannot use speech. These can include picture cards and hand signals.
LAC	Looked after children
PEP	Personal Education Plan- each looked after child will have one of these

Read the article and compare your own thoughts with the examples of practice at Camberwell Park.

Specifically consider these strategies and how they help children at the school express their views:

- Feelings boards
- Pupil booklet
- Seven stages of pupil voice

Task 3: How can we help very young children express their view?

UNCRC Article 12 suggests that age and maturity are factors when we think about the impact a child's voice should have on practice. Spend a few moments reflecting on your own views about this.

Imagine you work in a preschool (perhaps you do!) and you want to redesign the outdoor space to make it a more fun and effective learning environment for the children. How could you encourage the children themselves to tell you what they would like? Try to think of at least three different ways you could do this.

Now read *Say your piece*, available at www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/say-your-piece. This article is about the Mosaic Approach, which is a way of consulting with very young children using a variety of different techniques.

Consider:

- Are any of the techniques ones you had thought of already?
- How could these techniques (observation, child conferencing, photographs, map making and role play) help you gather childrens' views on your new outdoor space?

Task 4: Reflection on learning

Note down your responses to the following questions:

- What knowledge did I already have that has been refreshed by this CPD?
- How has this CPD developed my knowledge and understanding?
- How can I apply what I now know to my practice?

Sources

Clark, A. (2001) 'Say Your Piece', *Nursery World*, 4 July. Available at: <https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/say-your-piece> (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (Accessed: 8 July 2020)

Sefton Council (2017) *Young people with SEN and disabilities have a voice for Savvy App*. 28 March. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZceB69gdgw> (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

Tirraoro, T. (2019) 'Exemplary practice: Why this special school is proud of its pupil voice', *Special Needs Jungle*, 3 December. Available at: <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/exemplary-practice-why-this-special-school-is-proud-of-its-pupil-voice/> (Accessed: 9 July 2020)

Further reading

To find out more about the Mosaic Approach:

Clarke, A. (2011) 'Ways of Seeing', in Clark, A., Kj rholt and Moss, P. (eds.) *Beyond Listening. Children's perspectives on early childhood services*. Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 29–49. Available at: <https://learningaway.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/RL56-Extract-the-Mosaic-Approach-EARLY-YEARS.pdf>

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